

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. [Currently Amended] A data management system that communicates with a client terminal, the system comprising:

a virtual address connection defining a network address to which the client terminal sends a request reflecting a file transfer function with respect to a particular data file identified by the request;

a plurality of file server devices, each performing only file input-output type functions and capable of responding to all requests received by the virtual address connection, including performing the file transfer function requested by the client terminal, and wherein each of the plurality of file server devices has access to a common storage device that stores the particular data file to be transferred in accordance with the client request; such that each server device's ability to access the common storage device is the same;

a load balancer, associated with the virtual address connection, for receiving the request and for selecting one of the plurality of server devices to perform the requested function;

wherein the load balancer routes the request to the selected server device to perform the requested function, and wherein the selected server device accesses the common storage device to transfer the particular data file identified by the request; and

a data share unit for preventing more than one of the plurality of file server devices from simultaneously accessing the same storage location of the common server storage device.

2. [Previously Presented] The system of claim 1, wherein the plurality of file server devices operate in parallel.

3. [Original] The system of claim 1, wherein the request is a data file request and wherein the client terminal sends all requests to the virtual address connection.

4. [Previously Presented] The system of claim 1, wherein a plurality of client terminals send respective requests to the virtual address connection, and wherein the load balancer determines the one of the plurality of file server devices that will perform the server function requested by each of the plurality of client terminals.

5. [Previously Presented] The system of claim 1, wherein the load balancer randomly determines the file server device that will perform the server function.

6. [Previously Presented] The system of claim 1, wherein the load balancer determines the file server device that will perform the server function according to a predetermined rotational order.

7. [Previously Presented] The system of claim 1, wherein the load balancer determine the file server device that will perform the function based on a current processing load of each server device.

8. [Cancelled]

9. [Currently Amended] A method for operating a data management system that communicates with a client terminal, the method comprising:

receiving, from the client terminal, a request for performance of a file transfer server function with respect to a particular data file identified by the request, wherein the file transfer request is received at a virtual address connection defining a network address to which the client terminal sends the request for performance of the file transfer function;

selecting one of a plurality of file server devices to perform the requested file transfer function, wherein each of the plurality of file server devices performs only file input-output type functions and is capable of responding to all requests received by the virtual address connection, including performing the requested file transfer function, and wherein each of the plurality of file server devices has access to a common storage device for storing the particular data file to be transferred in accordance with the client request such that each server device's ability to access the common storage device is the same;

forwarding the client request to the selected file server device;

accessing, using the selected file server device, the storage device to transfer the particular data file identified by the request; [[and]]

forwarding a file server response to the client terminal based on the accessing by one selected file server device; and

preventing multiple file server devices from simultaneously accessing [[the]] a same storage location of the common storage device.

10. [Previously Presented] The method of claim 9, wherein the plurality of file server devices operate in parallel.

11. [Previously Presented] The method of claim 9, wherein the request is a data file request, and wherein receiving the file transfer request includes:

receiving all data file requests from the client terminal at the virtual address connection.

12. [Previously Presented] The method of claim 9, wherein receiving the file transfer request includes receiving requests for performing file transfer server functions from a plurality of client terminals at the virtual address connection, and wherein selecting one of the plurality of server devices further includes selecting each of the plurality of server devices that will perform one of the server functions requested by each of the plurality of client terminals.

13. [Previously Presented] The method of claim 9, wherein determining one of the plurality of file server devices further includes:

randomly determining the file server device that will perform the server function.

14. [Previously Presented] The method of claim 9, wherein determining one of the plurality of file server devices further includes:

determining the file server device that will perform the server function according to a predetermined rotational order.

15. [Previously Presented] The method of claim 9, wherein determining one of the plurality of file server devices further includes:

determining the file server device that will perform the server function based on a current processing load of each file server device.

16. [Cancelled]